

A Breath of Fresh (Sea) Air

Linden Groves, Conservation Officer for the East of England and London

Everyone likes a trip to the seaside and so we were delighted to be invited to Felixstowe to advise on restoration plans for the Cliff and Town Hall Gardens. Included on the *English Heritage Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest* at Grade II, they are a fine example of seafront public leisure gardens. We were very pleased that Suffolk Coastal District Council had been successful in gaining a Heritage Lottery Fund Round 1 grant to develop a project to restore the gardens and that it is now working on a Round 2 application to fund the actual restoration works themselves.

Felixstowe started to become a busy town in the mid-19th century after the arrival of the railway. In 1902 the Felixstowe and Walton Urban District Council created a seafront promenade to make the most of its long beach, and next to the Town Hall it added a small public garden stretching up the cliff, possibly using James Pulham.

A few years on, the council built a Spa Pavilion further down the promenade; this was later bombed in the Second World War but replaced with a new building in 1950. Alongside the Pavilion were the Spa Gardens, stretching from cliff-top to beach level, using local firm Notcutts Nurseries for the plants. These gardens were a pleasant series of terraces, paths, shelters, garden pockets and, of course, wonderful sea views. Changes continued over the next decades with the introduction of

more complex paths and planting. In the 1950s the adjoining seafront gardens of the Felix Hotel were given to the town and incorporated into the Spa Gardens as an area known as the Cliff Gardens.

Over the years the seafront and its gardens have become degraded with ad hoc changes to litterbins, seating, fences, entrances and parking resulting in an air of tatty neglect and missed opportunity. In 2007 the Society objected to the removal of the Long Shelter, an early 20th-century ornamental seating shelter that had developed structural problems, but the council chose not to follow our advice and removed the pavilion on the grounds that the economics of its repair could not be justified, especially given that it was prone to vandalism.

However, following our visit in spring 2009 we were pleased to be able to offer constructive advice on a way forward for the gardens, including the improvement of entrances, the importance of restoration rather than over-emphasising contemporary intervention, better management of planting in order to maximise views, access to the gardens from the cliff-top, reworking of traffic and car parking, and perhaps even the replacement of the demolished Long Shelter with something in the spirit of the original.

We now look forward to seeing this project develop and, specifically, to commenting on the draft conservation management plan later this summer.

conservation notes

Jonathan Lovie,
Principal Conservation Officer

Equestrian Olympics at Greenwich

The planning application to stage the Equestrian Olympics in Grade I Greenwich Park was considered by the planning authority in March, and consent has been granted for the work required to create the arena, cross country course and all associated infrastructure and ancillary features.

The permission is subject to 38 conditions, which, it has to be said, do not go very far towards addressing our concerns over the likely impact of the event on the Grade I registered park and World Heritage Site. Some seventeen conditions relate specifically to safeguarding archaeology within the Park, but with further detailed designs for aspects of the development such as hard standing, access and 'landscaping' required by other conditions, it is difficult to see how the planners could be satisfied that the proposals would not have a seriously adverse impact on the site.

Some comfort may be drawn from those conditions which state that consent for all temporary structures within the Park lapses on 13 September 2012, and the task of their removal must be completed by 31 December 2012.

The timetable for landscape reinstatement seems somewhat vaguer; although the cricket pitch must be reinstated within three months, and the only reference to the much vaunted 'Olympic Legacy' is the requirement that equestrian equipment shall be relocated to other appropriate sites after the completion of the Olympic events at Greenwich.

It is interesting to note that notwithstanding the grant of permission for the Greenwich development, some leading figures in the world of international equestrianism have continued publicly to voice significant concerns over the adequacy of Greenwich as an Olympic venue.

Planning Policy Statement 5 replaces PPG 15

Last year the Government published a draft replacement for Planning Policy Guidance Note 15, the document which, since 1994 has set out national policy for planning in the historic environment. In late March the final version of this new document was published.



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Planning Policy Statement 5 (PPS 5) is a very different type of document to its predecessor, and it has been carefully worded to be compatible with the much broader understanding of the historic environment and its significance which is evident in the new heritage protection and designation regime.

There is much for us to welcome in the new PPS: the emphasis on the inter-related nature of the constituent elements of the historic environment should help to address our concern that designed landscapes, though integrally linked with the structures for which they provide the setting, have in the past been too often treated as being of secondary importance.

The PPS places great emphasis on the need for anyone planning change affecting the historic environment to demonstrate a proper understanding of the significance of the various elements of that environment, and the impact of the proposed development on those elements both singly and collectively. This is a very welcome change in emphasis, and one which GHS conservation officers will be able to utilise in their scrutiny of planning applications.

The increased need for applicants to demonstrate a thorough understanding of their historic property may imply a greater volume of documentation for our staff to assimilate. This may help to prompt us to reconsider our priorities for conservation casework and the number of cases with which realistically we can engage.

High Speed Rail Link preferred route

Publication of the preferred route for the high speed rail link connecting London to the West Midlands and, ultimately, the north of England, has revealed that this scheme, if adopted, would have a significant direct impact on several nationally designated designed landscapes, and a more indirect impact on the settings of several more.

Sites in Buckinghamshire seem to be particularly badly affected by the route, with both **Hartwell (II*)** and **Eythrope (II)** being crossed by the proposed route. The settings of **Waddesdon (I)** and **Shardeloes (II*)** will also be affected.

In Warwickshire the proposed route will cross the Grade II* landscape at **Stoneleigh Abbey**. Here, the track will be raised on a viaduct to cross the flood plain of the River Avon, creating a physical and visual barrier between the grounds around the Abbey and the Deer Park, an integral part of the early nineteenth century picturesque landscape. Management of this landscape during the twentieth century has to some extent created a division between the two parts of the site; construction of a raised railway line will merely serve to make this division permanent and irreversible.

In addition to nationally designated sites it is clear that a number of locally listed landscapes, including some in the vicinity of Brackley, Northamptonshire will be affected by the proposed route.

The GHS will work closely with the affected county gardens trusts and the London Parks and Gardens Trust in order to present a robust response to the consultation on the preferred high speed route.

GHS Events update

Summer & Autumn 2010

Study Tour of Northamptonshire Houses and Gardens (and a Castle) **Wednesday 9 to Friday 11 June**

There are some places left on this tour and individual days may also be possible.

The cost for all three days is £155, contact: Jennifer Meirs, Jackson's Barn, Charlecote, Warwick, CV35 9EW, phone: 01789 840 226 or email: jennifer.meir@btinternet.com

GHS AGM & Annual Conference

Booking closes 5 June, see form
Ancaster Hall, University of Nottingham
Friday 2 July to Sunday 4 July

An additional visit to Felley Priory has been included on Sunday morning.
Conference fee: £310. Chloe Bennett: 01379 672 901 or: chloe.bennett1@btinternet.com

Brogdale & Doddington Place Gardens **Thursday 7 October**

Cost: £30. Contact Ruth Brownlow (with SAE) The Garden History Society, 70 Cowcross Street, etc (mark the envelope 'Brogdale'), or: ruth.brownlow@gmail.com

Sugnall walled garden & ferme ornée **Saturday 16 October**

A visit to the home of David and Karen Jacques. An introductory talk will be followed by lunch (in part grown in the restored walled garden). To be followed by a tour of the restoration work in the walled garden and an exploration of the *ferme ornée*, where David has been re-planting the hedges (see *Garden History* 9:1 Spring 1981 p26).

Cost £29. Send cheque and SAE to: Pamela Paterson, 25 Jermyn Street, London SW1Y 6HR, phone: 020 7434 0021 or email: pamelaathome@talktalk.net

Return to Chiswick **Tuesday 19 October**

Following on the successful study day at Chiswick in March 2010, afternoon tours of

A Garden Within Doors

A Study Day at the Geffrye Museum
10am to 4.30pm, Saturday 12 June
Inspired by the current exhibition, see www.geffrye-museum.org.uk for more.

Cost: £45, includes lunch etc.
Contact: 020 7739 9893 or email: bookings@geffrye-museum.org.uk

the recently restored grounds will be led by David Jacques, member of Chiswick House and Gardens Trust, and by Fiona Crumley, Head Gardener. An opportunity to hear both about the history of the site and its restoration from David, and the management of the grounds and conflict resolution from Fiona. Tea will be served, either in the new café or in the restored camellia house.
Members: £15 (GHS &/or London Parks and Gardens Trust), non-members: £18. For further information and application forms, please contact Robert Peel (with SAE), 34 Rodney Court, London W9 1TH, phone: 0207 121 8938 or email: rma.peel@btopenworld.com

Study Day at Hampton Court Palace **Ecology and the Designed Landscape** **Saturday 13 November**

An examination of those historic designed landscapes which are also covered by various nature conservation designations and discuss how potential conflicts can be positively resolved. Our speakers will represent both heritage and nature conservation interests.

Members: £49, student members (up to a maximum of 10): £39, non-members: £59; includes morning coffee, lunch and tea. For further information and application forms, contact Gwenneth Raybould: 0208 761 6565 or email: garden@gbz.demon.co.uk

Very advance dates 2011

It is hoped that the Turin Study Tour will take place from Tuesday 3 to Sunday 8 May.

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